

Kirk	Murray	Sessions
Klobuchar	Nelson	Shaheen
Lankford	Paul	Shelby
Leahy	Perdue	Stabenow
Lee	Peters	Sullivan
Manchin	Portman	Tester
Markey	Reed	Thune
McCain	Reid	Tillis
McCaskill	Risch	Udall
McConnell	Roberts	Vitter
Menendez	Rounds	Warner
Merkley	Sanders	Warren
Mikulski	Sasse	Whitehouse
Moran	Schatz	Wicker
Murkowski	Schumer	Wyden
Murphy	Scott	

## NOT VOTING—5

Ayotte	Graham	Toomey
Cruz	Rubio	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The majority leader.

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## TRIBUTE TO ETHELENE THOMPSON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Ethelene Thompson.

She was born on June 6, 1925, in Water Valley, MS, as the third child of Minnie and Solomon Morgan. Today, Ethelene is a caregiver known to many in her community for her willingness to provide free childcare and transportation to those in need. She lived through the Great Depression, World War II, the civil rights movement, and the election and tenure of the first African-American President. In 1946, she married Willie Thompson, and they raised six beautiful daughters, until his passing in 2000.

Mrs. Thompson has been instrumental in helping raise her 14 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-great-grandchildren. She is known to give selflessly of her time and wisdom and to countless folks in her neighborhood and at her church.

She helped lead the Girl Scout troops for her daughters and granddaughters, ensured that her grandson and his friends made it to every sports practice and game, and has served faithfully as a member of the Bloomfield Full Gospel Baptist Church for more than 50 years, where she has been a member of the choir, Sunday school, and kitchen ministry.

I take this opportunity to celebrate Mrs. Ethelene Thompson's life and leg-

acy. May she continue to grow in her steadfast faith and love for her family.

## LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, while the Senate was in recess, Loretta Lynch, the nominee to be our next Attorney General, announced that her office brought charges against two residents of Queens, NY, for conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction and plotting a terrorist attack on American soil. U.S. Attorney Lynch continues to work tirelessly to protect our Nation, but the Senate Republican leadership continues to play politics with our law enforcement and has prevented the Senate from fulfilling one of our most essential constitutional duties—the duty to provide advice and consent on Presidential nominations. The same baseless political obstructionism that has stalled Ms. Lynch's nomination has also led to the Senate's failure to confirm a single Federal judge so far this year.

As one of the country's top Federal prosecutors, Loretta Lynch has an unparalleled record of keeping Americans safe from dangerous criminals and terrorists. This includes the successful prosecution of six individuals for their roles in a 2009 Al Qaeda plot to attack the New York subway system, the convictions of four terrorists who plotted an attack on John F. Kennedy Airport, and the conviction of a terrorist who sought to detonate an explosive device at the New York Federal Reserve. Despite her distinguished record of service, the Republican leadership is trying to use Ms. Lynch's nomination for political gain. This is not how the Senate should be treating a nomination of such importance to law enforcement and our national security.

It has now been more than 5 months since President Obama announced the nomination of Ms. Lynch to be Attorney General. Her nomination was reported out of the Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support in February, yet it has been pending before the full Senate for 46 days. That is nearly twice as long as all of the past seven Attorneys General combined: Richard Thornburgh, 1 day; William Barr, 5 days; Janet Reno, 1 day; John Ashcroft, 2 days; Alberto Gonzales, 8 days; Michael Mukasey, 2 days; and Eric Holder, 5 days. This historic delay is an embarrassment for the Senate.

In January, Ms. Lynch testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee for nearly 8 hours and she responded to nearly 900 written questions. Not a single witness invited by Republicans opposed her nomination. When Republicans stalled consideration of Ms. Lynch's nomination in committee, Democrats noted the unnecessary delay and raised concerns about filling this vital position. The assistant Republican leader dismissed this as “faux outrage.” But in November 2007, that same Senator complained that a 7-week process on the Mukasey nomina-

tion threatened our national security. He issued a press release stating:

It is imperative that the president has his national security team at full strength and the unnecessary delay of Judge Mukasey's nomination has prevented that. He deserves an immediate up-or-down vote by the full Senate.

Similarly, in early October 2007—just 3 weeks after Mr. Mukasey's nomination was announced, the Republican leader criticized me for not yet having set a hearing date, saying that Democrats should “not hold Judge Mukasey hostage while they play partisan games.” This is the same Republican leader who is now holding Ms. Lynch's nomination hostage and who has kept her nomination languishing on the floor for nearly twice as long as the past seven Attorneys General combined.

No one can deny that Ms. Lynch is eminently qualified for the job. The Republican leader should schedule a vote on Ms. Lynch's nomination today. She has the votes to be confirmed, and a vote on this highly qualified nominee is long overdue. The Majority must stop playing political games with our law enforcement.

We should also be voting on all 10 judicial nominees who have been pending in the Senate since last year, two of whom just passed the 1-year mark since they were first nominated. Tonight, we will consider just one of those nominees. Once confirmed, Alfred Bennett will fill a “judicial emergency” vacancy in the Southern District of Texas that has been empty for more than 2 years. There is no good explanation why it has taken us nearly 7 months to vote on his nomination, nor is there a good reason for why we are not voting on the other two pending nominees to district court vacancies in Texas. There are still two Fifth Circuit vacancies and seven other Federal district court vacancies in Texas for which there are no nominees. Texas has two times the number of Federal court vacancies of any other State, and these vacancies account for one-third of the judicial emergency vacancies on our Nation's courts. I urge the Texas Senators to work with the President so that we can receive nominees for those vacancies as soon as possible.

Despite promises to govern responsibly, the Republican majority has continued to obstruct when it comes to judicial vacancies. When Senate Democrats were in the majority, we confirmed 15 of President Bush's district and circuit court nominees by April 2007. We confirmed 68 judges during the last 2 years of the Bush administration, building on a record I established at the very beginning of the Bush Presidency when 100 judges were confirmed in the 17 months that I served as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. The fact that it has taken more than 3 months into the 114th Congress for the Republican majority to schedule a vote on a single judicial nominee is disconcerting, especially because all four